Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for detecting the status of printers on a network using a print processor, said method comprising the acts of:

sending a signal to a <u>client</u> print processor; and

detecting the status of printers on a network from said print processor ~~to~~ ~~determine the availability of said printers~~ <u>through a communication between said print processor and said printers that does not access a server</u>.

2. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said signal is a print task.

3. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said detecting comprises obtaining network print queue information.

4. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said detecting comprises bi-directional communication between a print processor, a port manager and a printing device.

5. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said detecting comprises accessing data from a Management Information Base (MIB).

6. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said detecting comprises communication with a printing device using a protocol selected from the group consisting of Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP), Remote Management (RMON) and Internet Printing Protocol (IPP).

7. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said detecting comprises the use of an Application Program Interface (API) call.

8. (currently amended) A method of improving the probability of successful print task completion using a status detecting print processor, said method comprising:

sending a print task to a <u>client</u> print processor;

detecting, from said print processor, <u>and without receiving printer</u> <u>information from a server,</u> the status of a plurality of printing devices; and

directing said print task to an available printing device among said plurality of printing devices.

9. (original) The method of claim 8 wherein said status of a plurality of printing devices is presented to a user for selection of one or more available devices and said directing directs said print task to a device selected by said user.

10. (original) The method of claim 8 wherein a default printing device is selected by a user prior to said detecting and said directing directs said print task to said default device when said default device is available.

11. (original) The method of claim 8 wherein said print processor may also modify a print task to enable cluster printing functions.

12. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein said modifying said cluster printing functions comprise job splitting.

13. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein said modifying said cluster printing functions comprise copy splitting.

14. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein said detecting determines a number of available printing devices and said modifying divides said initial print task into a number of modified print tasks equal to said number of available printing devices.

15. (currently amended) A method for improving printing system capability and performance without addition of hardware or modification of application software, said method comprising:

> removing a non-status-detecting <u>client</u> print processor (NPP) from a printing system; and

> replacing said NPP with a status-detecting <u>client</u> print processor (SDPP).

16. (original) The method of claim 15 wherein said SDPP is also cluster enabling.

17. (currently amended) A computer readable medium comprising instructions for performing functions within a <u>client</u> print processor, said instructions comprising the acts of:

> interpreting print task data; and

> detecting the status of printing devices <u>without receiving printer information from a server</u>.

18. (original) The computer readable medium of claim 17 further comprising instructions for the act of redirecting a print task from its original destination to at least one other destination.

19. (currently amended) A computer data signal embodied in an electronic transmission, said signal having the function of detecting printing device status with a <u>client</u> print processor, said signal comprising instructions for:

> interpreting print task data; and

> detecting the status of printing devices <u>without receiving printer information from a server</u>.

20. (currently amended) A <u>client</u> print processor comprising:

> instructions for interpreting print task data; and

> instructions for detecting the status of printing devices <u>without receiving printer information from a server</u>.

21. (currently amended) A method of printing using a status detecting print processor, said method comprising:

selecting a preferred printer group;

modifying said print task to enable cluster printing thereby creating a plurality of modified print tasks;

detecting, from said print processor, the status of a plurality of printing devices comprising said preferred printer group without receiving printer information from a server;

directing said modified print tasks to said preferred printer group when all of the printers within said preferred printer group are available; and

forming a second group of printers comprising the available printers within said preferred group and other available printers and sending said modified tasks to said second group when said second group comprises a sufficient number of printers to print said modified print tasks.

22. (original) The method of claim 21 further comprising selecting a group of backup printers from which said other available printers may be chosen.

23. (original) The method of claim 21 further comprising reconfiguring said modified print tasks to require fewer printers when a sufficient number of available printers cannot be found.

24. (original) The method of claim 21 further comprising forming a third group of printers comprising any available printers from said preferred group, any other available printers and any busy printers and directing said modified print tasks to said third group.

25. (original) The method of claim 21 further comprising entering a wait period when a sufficient number of printers are not available and rechecking for available printers after said wait period.

26. (original) The method of claim 21 further comprising activating a user prompt to solicit user input.